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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 29 | Min 17 | Humidity 34% Mostly Cloudy Sensex 71,941 | Nifty 21,737 | Gold 62,203 | Silver 71,850 | Dollar 83.14 | Euro 89.84 | GBP 105.41

FEEDER FIX

No parking at bus bays

PAGE 3

REWEAVE

Rule change hits garment factories

PAGE 5

How air pollutants such as PM2.5 impact land surface temperature, affect local climate dynamics

TOXIC HEAT

Study conducted during summer/winter for 4 years

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High concentration of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) in Bengaluru over the past four years is leading to high land surface temperature in various parts of the city, causing urban heat island (UHI) effect, a study by a group of researchers from Jaipur, Rajasthan has suggested.

The study was conducted during the summer and winter for four years (2019–2022) to analyse the impact of vegetation cover, elevation, and air pollutants on UHI effect.

The results showed air pollutants are the most important factor leading to higher land surface temperatures (LST). Out of all pollutants studied (PM2.5, SO2, O3, CO, and NO2), PM2.5 turned out to be the biggest contributor to surface temperature.

Furthermore, season-based analysis revealed that while PM2.5 had maximum contribution towards affecting surface temperature leading to higher UHI effect at the local level, O3 (ozone) was the primary contributor to UHI effect during summer.

The relative contribution of PM2.5 and O3 were reversed

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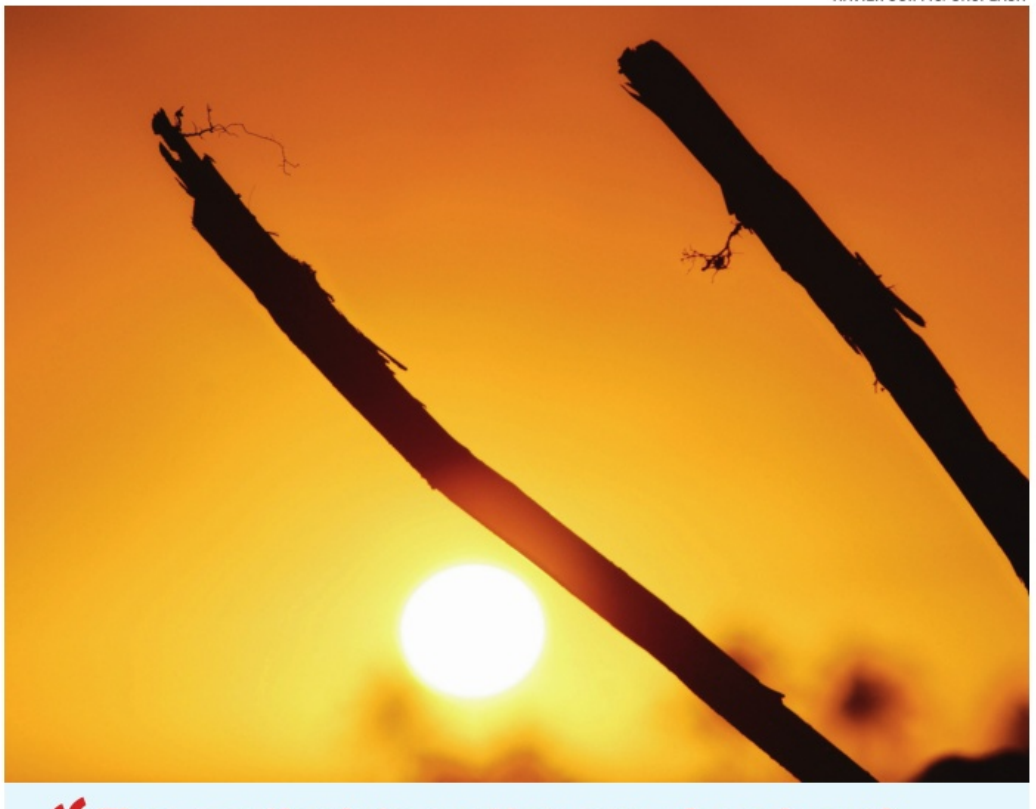
XAVIER COIFFIC/UNSPLASH



“Fine particulate matter can absorb and scatter sunlight, influencing the local energy balance and surface temperature

— Gaurav Suthar, research scholar, co-author of study

Can mobile labs fix roads?

BBMP’s mobile laboratories to conduct tests and ensure scientific construction of roads

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To improve the quality of roads being constructed, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike is planning to launch mobile testing labs. These mobile labs would conduct necessary tests to ensure the scientific construction of roads.

The BBMP is reviving one of its old projects to ensure better roads for Bengaluru by introducing mobile testing labs. With testing vans positioned near under-construction roads, they will ensure the roads are built as per the required parameters.

The quality control and assurance department of the civic body has floated a short-term tender inviting bidders for the construction of a specially designed mobile lab along with equipment for various tests.

“We requested the BBMP commissioner’s permission to start this mobile lab. The mobile lab would be present on under-construction roads and ensure quality control. Using the lab, our wing will be able to conduct tests and analysis of road quality, for example, testing of bitumen content. Each lab will have one engineer, an assistant engineer and AEE present to ensure proper conducting of the tests,” said a senior BBMP official.

The BBMP has nearly 13,000 km of roads and 1,400 km of arterial and sub arterial roads. However, residents across the city

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 Unique dance show

One of the leading Odissi exponents, Sharmila Mukerjee, and her dance ensemble Sanjali are set to present 'Hansika', an Odissi adaptation of the widely acclaimed Russian ballet Swan Lake. With an ensemble of 25 artists, Hansika showcases a western classical theme through the Indian classical danceform Odissi.

Where: ADA Rangamandira, JC Road
When: Sunday, February 4; 6:30 pm

02 Artwork at best

Grab the chance to attend Bangalore Arts and Craft Mela, which promises a captivating display and sale of exquisite handicrafts. You can get your hands on clothing, wooden ornaments, and women's bridal attire to warm clothing, blankets, artworks, furniture, ceramics, mats, and more.

Where: Chitrakala Parishath
When: until February 4

A star is born: Baby elephant debuts

Arrival of baby elephant at Bannerghatta Biological Park has stirred excitement among both visitors and staff; Mysuru welcomes gorilla from Frankfurt

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The elephant calf weighs between 120 and 130 kg; Mysuru zoo is currently the only in country to have gorilla

The Bannerghatta Biological Park is brimming with excitement as it welcomes a delightful new addition—a baby boy elephant calf. This adorable arrival brings the elephant count in the Bannerghatta zoo to a total of 26, eliciting joy not only among the visitors but also among the dedicated staff. Both the mother and the newborn are receiving special attention and care to ensure their well-being. The elephant calf, weighing between 120 and 130 kg, adds a heartwarming charm to the zoo's vibrant atmosphere.

Meanwhile, in Mysuru, a novel attraction awaits visitors—the gorilla enclosure spanning an impressive 37,000 square feet. This expansive enclosure provides a unique opportunity for visitors to observe gorillas up close. While many enthusiasts typically travel to African countries for such experiences, Mysuru has become a standout destination, being the only zoo in the entire country where gorillas can be observed. The gorilla in Mysuru was brought from Frankfurt, adding an international flair to the zoo's diverse wildlife collection.

In another development, a male giraffe has been relocated to Hampi's Atal Bihari Vajapayee zoo to serve as a companion for a patiently waiting female giraffe. This move makes Hampi Zoo the exclusive zoo in North Karnataka to house giraffes. Currently, Bengaluru and Mysuru zoos are the only other locations in the state with giraffes. The four-year-old female giraffe in Hampi was previously brought from Patna, Bihar.

Meanwhile, a 1.5-year-old girl was injured when a battery-operated vehicle hit her in Bannerghatta zoo. The girl has been admitted to a private hospital.

> **"In comparison to previous years, the bird population has decreased. and we believe that climate change is a contributing factor**
> –a senior official

Reduction in migratory birds

Furthermore, ornithologists and bird watchers have been complaining about the reduction of migratory birds visiting lakes in and around Bengaluru due to climate change. Sources said that this year has brought unprecedented manifestations of climate change, particularly evident in the altered weather patterns across various regions. Northern areas, such as Gulmarg and Auli, are experiencing a scarcity of snowfall, contributing to concerns about the changing climate. Another distressing observation is the decline in the number of migratory birds visiting locations in and around Bengaluru. Well-known bird habitats like Kokkare Bellur, Doddaballapur, Ranganathittu, and Channapatna Lake usually witness a significant influx of migratory birds by the end of October, with their departure in March. As January concludes, the usual throng of visitors is notably absent this time, with only a few lakes hosting diminished numbers of winged guests.

A senior official said, "In comparison to previous years, the bird population has decreased, and we believe that climate change is a contributing factor." Locals in these areas have also observed the challenges faced by the birds in locating prey and securing food resources.

Meet DHEE cricket champs

The DHEE Multi Super Speciality Hospitals cricket team emerged victorious at the FCL3 Mega Tennis Ball Cricket Tournament held on Kanakapura Road. Dr Chandrasekar Chikkamuniyappa, CEO and Senior Joint Replacement Surgeon at DHEE Hospitals, said, "There were 68 matches, 480 men, and 120 women players. A healthier and happier life is built on more than just medical care. Sports play a vital role in fostering both physical and mental well-being, creating a foundation for joy, community, and a sense of accomplishment." He added that at DHEE, they are passionate about championing active lifestyles, aligning perfectly with our mission to make people healthier, happier, and more together. "We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Federation Sports and Community Foundation for organising the FCL3. I also congratulate the organising team.

–BMB

New stop for city's art aficionados

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Dwija Art Gallery will open on February 2; the exhibition will run until February 18

In order to promote artists, the DWIJA Conservation Society of Art & Cultural Heritage, a distinguished institution with a thirty-year legacy, is set to elevate the cultural landscape of Bengaluru by inaugurating the Dwija Art Gallery, nestled in an Italian heritage bungalow on Convent Road, Richmond Town.

M Girish Koti, South Zone Executive Director, DWIJA Conservation Society of Art & Cultural Heritage, said, "Designed to be a haven for art enthusiasts, collectors, and the community, Dwija Art Gallery aims to provide an immersive experience that celebrates the rich tapestry of artistic expression while fostering the growth of talented artists. This expansion marks a significant stride in society's commitment to preserving and promoting art and cultural heritage."

Ten selected artists from various parts of the country will showcase their works, spanning diverse styles, mediums, and genres. The participating artists include notable names such as Ram Kumar Manna, B Devaraj, Giridhar Khasnis, Ramchandra Kharatmal, Raja Boro, Pradiptaa Chakraborty, Milind Limbekar, Amrita Varma, Appajaiah KS, Amal Dev, and Dileep Swastik. The opening of Dwija Art Gallery will be on February 2 and coincide with the launch of 'Sentient', a captivating group exhibition featuring paintings, sculptures, graphics, and installations. The exhibition will run until February 18, 2024.

This art gallery will have four sculptures, 13 graphic prints, 11 photographs, two installations, and 12 paintings.

Girish emphasised that DWIJA's main objective is the conservation of cultural property, encompassing individual items, structures, or comprehensive collections.

"The gallery acts as a cultural hub, promoting dialogue and interaction among artists, critics, and the public. Such interactions contribute to the growth of artistic communities and the exchange of ideas, fostering a supportive environment for artists to thrive," he said.

In essence, the importance of a specialised art gallery lies in its role as a catalyst for artistic development, exposure, and community engagement.

No parking at metro feeder bus bays means NO PARKING

Mobility experts point to design lapses, lack of implementation of rules as illegal parking forces buses to stop on main road

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As Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) starts launching metro feeder buses, questions have emerged on whether they should have bus shelters instead of bus bays. This is because bus bays just end up becoming illegal parking spots.

While bus bays provide a scientific carving out of space within the footpath areas and prevent stoppages of buses in the main carriageway, they often fail to meet the purpose. Private vehicles and auto rickshaws often use the space to park. The new bus bays near metro stations too are suffering the same fate.

At MG Road metro station, a signage has been put up: 'Metro feeder bus stop' and a half-bay has been designed. However, the space was occupied by private vehicles forcing buses to stop away from the stop. Similar instances can be seen in other metro stations as well.

BMTC is currently running 121 metro feeder buses and plans to increase it to 300 by April 2024. Increased stoppages of metro feeder buses without adequate facilities may add to the city's traffic problem. While BMTC handles the operations of buses, the construction of shelters and bays remains with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

In 2023, Bengaluru traffic police booked 5,499 cases for parking at BMTC bus stops. "We have been working with Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) to address the issues. We usually send out our team to monitor the space but it should be a joint effort by BMRCL, BMTC and traffic police," said a senior BMTC official.

"We will request BMRCL to look into the issue of parked vehicles. We send our team to monitor the space but it should be a joint effort by BMRCL, BMTC and traffic police

Mobility expert Rajkumar Dugar said there is a massive parking issue near Cubbon Park metro station. "For a single metro feeder route from Cubbon Park to Vasanthnagar, if there are 10 stops, four are made on designated stops. With the launch of over 100 metro feeder buses, that's a total of 1,000 stoppages. BMTC should ask its Sarathi unit to visit the spot and send violation pictures to traffic police for action. We insist that the fine should be at least double the parking charges for the area," said Dugar.

Design error

Activists say that the metro has failed to incorporate buses in the design of even its new stations. "Transit designs cannot be added as ad hoc measures but must be part of the planning stage of stations," said civic activist Sandeep Anirudhan.

Mobility expert Ashwin Mahesh says the design should have included the bus bay/shelter. "People enter the station in smaller numbers but exit in larger numbers. Metro should have adequate space for the large footfall at exits. Every station should have a practical design incorporating the multi-modal transit model. The major problem is that design has not included space for modes of transport forcing auto drivers and taxi drivers to park here," said Ashwin.

Mobility expert Sathya told BM the problem lies with not having a single transport authority to hold others accountable. "Ideally, the Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA) would hold all the stakeholders accountable and would be able to issue a statutory direction," Sathya said.

CRIME FILES

Fake 'standards officers' try to run off with gold

Police have apprehended four individuals accused of orchestrating a robbery of Rs 85 lakh from a jewelry store by masquerading as hallmark and GST verification officers. The suspects, identified as Sampath (55) and Joshi R Thomas (54) from Kerala, along with Sandeep (48) and Avinash Kumar from Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, allegedly carried out the fraudulent act at Mahalakshmi Jewelers within the KR Puram police station jurisdiction.

According to authorities, the perpetrators, posing as officials from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), arrived at the jewelry store purportedly to probe complaints about the sale of non-hallmarked jewelry. After a '45-minute inspection', they confiscated approximately 1.2 kg of gold valued at Rs 85 lakh and issued a spurious notice to the shop owner, directing them to report for further interrogation.

Their suspicious behavior, including confiscating CCTV footage and attempting to flee in a vehicle, prompted staff members to trail them. The chase led to a collision with motorcyclists in the busy streets of TC Palya. Subsequently, law enforcement was alerted, and the suspects were apprehended near TC Palya.

It has been revealed that one of the accused, Sampath, already faces theft charges in Mandya.

Woman attacks Bescom worker

A resident of Old Chandrapura is facing charges after allegedly assaulting a lineman from the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM). The incident took place on January 24, when the lineman, Harish Halamani, was trying to disconnect an unauthorised power supply line to a building under construction. The woman, Roopamma, allegedly became abusive and assaulted Halamani. The altercation recorded on camera, shows Roopamma's aggression towards the workers. A complaint was lodged at the Surnagar Police Station by a Junior Engineer from BESCOM who was present there. According to the FIR, Roopamma slapped Halamani when he attempted to disconnect the illegal power connection to her property. Charges have been filed under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including criminal intimidation, intentional insult, causing hurt, and assaulting a public servant. Roopamma is currently evading authorities.

Congress member accused of job con

A member of the Congress party is facing allegations of deceiving individuals with promises of securing them government employment. A woman victim, Roopa, lodged a complaint with the Jayanagar Police Station, alleging that she paid over Rs 11 lakh to the party worker but did not receive the promised job. The accused, identified as Sandhya Pavitra Nagaraj, is accused of engaging in fraudulent activities.

According to the complaint, Banu Prakash and Harish befriended Roopa's brother, Rangaswamy, in 2021, offering to assist him in obtaining a government position. Allegedly, they collected Rs 3.5 lakh from Rangaswamy and forwarded it to Sandhya. Subsequently, Sandhya demanded an additional Rs 7,70,000 from Rangaswamy, promising government jobs for both him and Roopa. Sandhya promised to reimburse the funds, in November 2023, but the complainants assert that she has not fulfilled this commitment. Sandhya is accused of perpetrating a similar scam in Yadgir. BMB

Number-crunching to make auto rides safer around Majestic

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In a move that would prove to be beneficiary to women wanting to venture out in the night, the Upparpet Police Station has designated specific numbers to autos that ply in and around the Majestic area.

Women have been facing problems with regard to a threat of sexual harassment and theft of jewellery while boarding an auto at night. As passengers often fail to details of the number plate of the auto, it was a challenge for the police officials to track down the perpetrators of the crime.

The assigning of numbers aims to deal with this challenge and would be applicable for regions in and around the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus stop, Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus stand, metro station, railway station and the auto stand at Majestic area.

A police official told BM that the details were collected from auto drivers in December 2023.

The numbers will be provided after the complete details of the driver are registered in the nearby police station.

The drivers are mandated to display the UPS numbers to the passengers. The UPS number would be 2-3 digits and hence easy to remember. "The numbers are in specific order so it can easily be remembered," the police told BM.

Passengers are advised to only board autos that have the number.

Green tribunal tackles lake pollution head on

NGT issues notices to multiple government agencies as 12 lakes in city face severe pollution

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The sorry state of Bengaluru's lakes has prompted the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to impeach multiple state and central government agencies for high pollution levels.

The green court has sent notices to these agencies after taking suo moto notice of a news report that appeared in Bangalore Mirror on December 26, 2023. BM published a news article based on the monthly water quality report of 117 lakes and tanks by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB).

As per KSPCB's report, 12 out of 117 lakes, namely - Madiwala, Herohalli, Karihobanahalli, Dasarahalli, Varthur, Uttarahalli Doraikere, River Dakshina Pinakini near Mugalur, Devarabeesanahalli, Rampura, Kammasandra, Chandapura, Hosakerehalli - recorded 'below detection level' oxygen concentration in November last year.

Citing the news item, the NGT principal bench has accused the regional director of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Member Secretary of KSPCB, Commissioner of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), and Executive Head of Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority.

"This original application is registered suo motu on the basis of the news item titled "Bengaluru's water bodies are gasping for oxygen" published in 'Bangalore Mirror' dated December 26, 2023. As per the news report, over 10 per cent of water bodies in the city are in critical states as dissolved oxygen (DO) has plummeted to an all-time low and total coliform has reached unprecedented high levels. The news report reveals that water quality analysis of 117 lakes shows that over 10 per cent of the water bodies are anoxic. The news item raises substantial issues relating to compliance with the environmental norms," noted the order passed by the tribunal.

Madiwala Lake is one of the 12 lakes that recorded 'below detection level' oxygen concentration last year

KSPCB has been generating monthly water quality reports of selected water bodies based on 25 parameters such as DO, BOD, phosphate, nitrate, total coliform, etc. to be put in the public domain

The tribunal further stated that while CPCB has entered an appearance through an advocate, notices have been issued to the rest of the agencies to file their response before the concerned bench of the court at least one week before the next date of hearing.

The case has been transferred to the Southern Zone Bench of NGT for the next hearing on February 28.

As per KSPCB's report, while the DO in these 12 lakes was found to be below 0.3mg/l (below detection level), these water bodies also had astonishingly high levels of pathogen-based contamination (total and faecal coliform bacteria).

According to CPCB guidelines, a water body that can be used as a drinking water source after conventional treatment and disinfection should have a total coliform organism level at 5,000 MPN/100ml, DO value of 4mg/l or more, and Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) of 3 mg/l or less.

However, in some of these lakes, the total coliform level was as high as 24,00,00,000 MPN/100ml.

KSPCB has been generating monthly water quality reports of selected water bodies based on 25 parameters such as DO, BOD, phosphate, nitrate, total coliform, etc. to be put in the public domain. However, none of the 117 water bodies had all water quality parameters meeting desirable levels.

City-based lake experts say the rising pollution levels in the city's water bodies call for an urgent coordinated action plan by various agencies such as Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), BBMP, and KSPCB.

"BBMP should keep a watch on pollutant entry and BWSSB should come up with a quick response system in case of untreated sewage flowing into the lakes. Along with these agencies, KSPCB should take proactive steps to investigate and penalise polluters. Moreover, the Board should be more transparent about the sampling process and these details should also be made available in the public domain," said Raghavendra B Pachhapur, a city-based lake activist.

Record-breaking turnout at Republic Day flower show

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This year's Republic Day flower show at Lalbagh paid homage to Vishwaguru Basavanna and Vachana Sahithya, drawing a total of 5.61 lakh attendees (including additional personnel such as gardeners, police, volunteers, and officials totalling 35,000). The event achieved the highest collection of Rs 2.59 crore, marking a record in the history of Republic Day flower shows. Remarkably, despite the large crowd, volunteers revealed that the waste generated was only 4.5 tons, indicating a relatively low amount of waste for such a massive gathering.

The Horticultural Department, in collaboration with organisations like Saahas, The Indian Ploggers' Army, Beautiful Bengaluru, and several college student-run organisations, proactively raised awareness before and during the event, urging a substantial audience to refrain from littering and encouraging vendors to avoid plastic usage. Additionally, the initiative emphasised the importance of minimising unnecessary waste. Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Marshalls also took part by imposing fines on vendors persisting in the use of plastic.

Vendors participating in regular disposing of waste at the flower show

Smita Kulkarni, part of the Communications Team at Saahas, remarked, "The Lalbagh flower show concluded successfully. The Saahas team, led by Radha, collaborated with authorities throughout the month to restrict food stalls to specific areas and educate vendors about the single-use plastic ban. Over the 10-day event, we had 10 Saahas team members and 10-30 volunteers each day at Lalbagh. Five to six Saahas team members worked alongside volunteers, providing gloves, jackets, and plog bags, and mentoring them to raise awareness against littering in Lalbagh and actively picking up litter throughout the day. Three to four team members coordinated with the collection team, ensuring regular emptying of public waste bins, waste bins at food vendors, and the litter bags used by ploggers. We collected approximately 4.5 tons of dry waste, with high-value dry waste sent to Dry Waste Collection Centres and low-value dry waste sent to BBMP."

"Beautiful Bharat has been building awareness around the 'Reduce Waste' theme year-round, especially for the Lalbagh flower show. We have been working with the department to implement tighter processes that facilitate this initiative. I am happy to say that the gate checks for visitors were very effective. All plastic bottles, plastic bags, as well as chip packets and other wrappers, were confiscated at the gate. This visual was powerful in spreading the message. News of this spread, along with our awareness messages through city WhatsApp groups, advising visitors to bring their own water and bags. Both of these efforts contributed to a higher percentage of the visiting public this year shifting to reusable bottles compared to earlier. Additionally, juice and water stalls mostly used zero-waste glass bottles, which was an added factor in generating less waste. However, the number of paper cups was high at some coconut water or juice stalls. This will be a focus for eliminating waste in the next show," said Odette Katrak, Co-founder of Beautiful Bharat.

The Ploggers' Army also initiated plogging to maintain clear spaces with the help of volunteers and the BBMP marshals, said Raj from the Indian Ploggers' Army.

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Problems in your area?
Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

Pavement occupied
Banaswadi

Fruit sellers are occupying the footpath opposite the Ayyapaa temple on Banaswadi Road.

Board down!
Hebbal

Shoddy placement of name board in Kempapura makes it difficult for people to read.

Cleanup request
RT Nagar

A request has been made to clear the debris at 3rd Cross, Hanumanthappa Layout, Sultanpalya.

Critical times for garment industry amid MSME rule changes

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On Monday, the South India Garment Association (SIGA) expressed its concern about the new payment rule for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), describing it as detrimental to the growth of the garment industry. In a letter addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, SIGA requested the repeal of the new rule, specifically Rule 43B(H) of the Income Tax Act, which has a significant impact on numerous garment units across the country.

Clause (h) of Section 43B of the Income Tax Act stipulates that any sum payable to the assessed, pertaining to a micro or small enterprise, beyond the time limit specified in Section 15 of the MSMEs Development Act, 2006, shall be allowed only in the previous year in which such sum is actually paid. The clause makes it mandatory to make payments to micro and small manufacturers and traders within 15 to 45 days for the goods bought from them before March 31, 2024. The new rule explicitly states that failing to adhere to this timeline will result in the pending payment being deemed as income on which tax will be levied.

SIGA has expressed concern, stating that the implementation of the new rule will adversely affect many garment factories. This is because garment shops and dealers typically make payments only after a period of 90 days.

"It will be a big blow to the garment industry which is already in trouble due to competition from corporate companies. I appeal to the Prime Minister to repeal the new rule in the interest of the garment industry that provides jobs to lakhs of people," said SIGA president Anurag Singhla.

Workers in a garment factory stitching shirts

Though the government's intention is to protect MSMEs, many garment factories began receiving cancellation orders from their clients. "The garment industry has been facing a lot of problems. The new rule will have an adverse impact on the industry. It may not be an exaggeration to say the garment industry is facing its worst crisis for the first time in 50 years. I have been associated with the industry for the last 50 years. I never come across this type of problem," said Naresh Lakhanpal, vice president of SIGA.

Speaking with Bangalore Mirror over the phone from Mumbai, BC Shivakumar, the Managing Director of BS Channabasappa & Sons, expressed that while the intention behind the new rule is good, its implementation is expected to have adverse effects on the garment industry. "The average period to make payments in the garment industry is 90 days. If the government insists on making payments within 45 days, it will affect the garment industry. I request the government to implement the new rule in a phased manner," said Shivakumar.

Appealing to the government not to enforce the new rule, Kundan Jain, former president of SIGA, said that garment suppliers are worried over the cancellation of orders from the retailers. "I have been associated with the garment industry for the last 27 years. Making payment within 75 to 90 days is the norm in the garment industry. It will be tough to make payments within 45 days," said Kundan Jain.

Rail expansion: K-Ride proposes, SWR disposes

Backlash ensues as SWR rejects suburban rail Phase-2, leaving proposed extension to satellite towns in limbo; attention drawn to railway expansion for better commuting in city

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K-Ride has urged the South Western Railways (SWR) to reconsider its rejection of connecting suburban trains to nearby satellite areas. A senior official from K-Ride explained that the initiative originated from a letter dated April 28, 2023. In this letter, the Commissioner of the Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT) requested K-RIDE to extend the existing Bengaluru Sub Urban Rail Project (BSRP) network. The proposed extension included connecting Heelalige to Chandapura, Kengeri to Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout (BDA), Challaghatta, and exploring the extension of suburban rail to satellite towns.

Following this, in a meeting on June 26, 2023, the K-RIDE Board granted "in-principle" approval for a pre-feasibility study for the extension of BSRP to satellite towns, termed as BSRP Phase-2, covering a total length of 452 km. The K-Ride official stated that this requires prior approval from the railway board through zonal railways. This process follows the guidelines of the National Suburban Rail Policy, 2018, which dictates a cost-sharing ratio of 50:50 between the State Government and Indian Railways for feasibility studies.

On July 4, 2023, K-Ride submitted the extension proposal of BSRP to Satellite towns, amounting to 452 km, to the General Manager of SWR. K-Ride expressed its willingness to conduct the pre-feasibility study. Despite these efforts, SWR rejected the proposal on November 13, 2023, stating that there was no justification for a pre-feasibility study, given the sufficient planning already undertaken by Indian Railways.

K-RIDE commenced preliminary work for the Bengaluru Sub Urban Rail Project near Nagawara last year

> **This is a clear indication that if plans to connect nearby satellite areas are not implemented now, the extension work will face further delays for many more decades**
>
> –Suresh Kumar, a regular commuter from Bangarpet to Bengaluru

In response, K-Ride sent another letter on December 28, 2023, urging GM/SWR to reconsider and recommend approval to the Railway Board for conducting the pre-feasibility study. Approval from SWR is crucial for connecting BSRP from Heelalige to Chandapura and Kengeri to Challaghatta/Kempegowda Layout, as these are included in the proposed BSRP Phase 2. The K-Ride official highlighted that they are eagerly awaiting SWR's approval for the same.

Activists say that there is a need to extend the railway lines. "We have seen in cities like Mumbai and Chennai how efficient suburban railway networks have helped people living in suburbs or nearby towns travel to the main city for work and vice versa. Suburban trains are a cost-effective measure for travel, reducing vehicle congestion on roads and pollution. In fact, Bengaluru has been a late entrant to the suburban train network. Even now, the work is still progressing slowly and will take many more years to complete. This is a clear indication that if plans to connect nearby satellite areas are not implemented now, the extension work will face further delays for many more decades. All the agencies concerned should collaborate and make decisions on an extension to facilitate people in neighbouring towns of Bengaluru to use trains for travel," said Suresh Kumar, who travels from Bangarpet to Bengaluru daily by train.

Child's fall: Parents demand answers

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TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

Parents of a four-year-old who succumbed to injuries three days after experiencing a fall from the third floor of her preschool in eastern Bengaluru are likely to approach Kerala Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan, demanding an expeditious redressal of the case. The victim, Gianna Ann Jito, is survived by her parents, Jito Tomy Joseph and Binitta Thomas, who are both software engineers and natives of the neighbouring state of Kerala. The family had moved to Bengaluru only seven months ago.

Prior to this development, the parents of the victim had filed a complaint with the Chief Minister and Education Minister of Karnataka, demanding an investigation into the incident.

On January 22, the father received a phone call from school authorities claiming his child was vomiting after hitting a wall on the premises. However, soon after rushing to the school, he discovered that the child had been taken to a hospital after falling from the terrace of the preschool building located in Challakere, sustaining severe injuries to her head and other parts of the body.

Later, Gianna was shifted to a private hospital in Hebbal for further treatment. Unfortunately, she succumbed to injuries on Thursday evening. Following a complaint from the victim's father, jurisdictional Hennur police initially booked the school principal among others under IPC sections that deal with causing grievous hurt by an act endangering the life or personal safety of others. After Gianna's death, the police were taking measures to invoke IPC sections related to causing death by negligence.

The police had earlier said that the relevant CCTV footage from the day of the incident is not available as the camera in the school is not working. On the other hand, the principal of the preschool, Thomas Cherian, a native of Kottayam, has been absconding.

Young tiger's death puts spotlight on invasive traffic

Tiger succumbs to injuries after speeding vehicle struck it near Mysuru airport; conservationists say infra is eating into wildlife habitats

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The young tiger belonged to a litter of four cubs that were regularly sighted with their mother near Nanjangud

In a tragic incident, a one-and-a-half-year-old male tiger died after being hit by a vehicle in Mysuru on January 28 (Sunday) late at night. The incident reportedly happened near the Mysuru airport. According to officials from the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD), the tiger was knocked down by a speeding vehicle, and the vehicle has been seized by the department.

The young tiger belonged to a litter of four cubs that were regularly sighted with their mother near Nanjangud. The tigersustained serious head injuries in the accident.

Wildlife conservationists say ill-conceived road infrastructure projects and other development work in protected areas and forest reserves are eating into wildlife habitats, forcing wild animals to cross highways or land in human habitations.

They pinpoint various ongoing and upcoming development projects in forest areas of Karnataka that would lead to higher incidents of road kills and human-animal conflict cases in the days to come.

A few months ago, the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) got clearance from the National Board of Wildlife for a six-lane elevated highway inside the Bannerghatta National Forest (BNF). A part of Satellite Township Ring Road, the flyover will be built on a 3.85-kilometre stretch between Bannerghatta and Jigani. For the project, NHAI has also sought the diversion of 27 acres of land in the core area of BNP and 14 acres in the buffer zone of the park.

The State's National Highway Department, a couple of years back, proposed a 12-km national highway stretch in Bandipur Tiger Reserve. To add to these road infrastructure projects, wildlife conservationists have been raising the issue of various infrastructure development activities in the core areas of Kali Tiger Reserve.

They opine that the proposed elevated road infrastructure in BNP and similar projects in other forests will only drive wildlife towards cities.

"The number of tigers in our forests has increased while their habitat has degraded and declined. Unless we ensure that forests are not fragmented and curtail the zeal towards eco-tourism, road kills of keystone species and other wildlife will continue. For instance, while NHAI has proposed the six-lane elevated highway through BNP, the park now houses two males and one female tiger. This indicates that the number of tigers in the landscape is expected to increase soon. These animals are already venturing out, and given the proposed and ongoing development activities, more such cases will emerge in the future," said Joseph Hoover, a former State Board for Wildlife member and founder of the United Conservation Movement and Charitable Trust.

> **"The number of tigers in our forests has increased while their habitat has degraded and declined** —Joseph Hoover

'Use remote sensing tech to track forest fire'

Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has said that remote sensing technology should be efficiently used to track and manage forest fire incidents in the state. The minister attended a demonstration session on RS technology at Aranya Bhavan on Monday and suggested that the technology should be used by the Fire Prevention Cell of the Karnataka Forest Department for better management.

"Timely information about the occurrence of fire can prevent further damage to the forest. In this regard, all necessary precautionary measures should be taken to prevent and control the forest fire," said Khandre.

KFD officials also informed the minister that the frequent occurrence of forest fires in certain forest areas of the state has been codified from the last 15 years of data, and hot spots have been identified. On this, the minister directed the officials to deploy more fire watchers in these areas and keep surveillance through drone cameras.

He also highlighted that some miscreants are deliberately setting fire to the forest in some places. If caught, criminal cases will be filed, and strict action will be taken against the offenders. — BMB

Teachers' constituency: Nomination filed

Candidates from the Congress and the NDA filed nominations on Monday for the legislative council election from the Bangalore Teachers' Constituency.

Tuesday is the last day to register as a candidate for the election, which will take place on February 16. Former MLC Puttanna of the Congress and AP Ranganath, representing the BJP-JD(s), filed their nominations today. The elections are being held as Puttanna, who held the seat, resigned from the BJP as well as the Legislative Council on March 16, 2023. — PTI

New gate commemorates legacy of Field Marshal

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The grand entrance gate was unveiled by Lt General KS Brar

The grand entrance gate and statue dedicated to Field Marshal SHFJ Sam Manekshaw MC, were unveiled at the Parade Ground by Lieutenant General KS Brar, General Officer Commanding (GOC), Dakshin Bharat Area, on Monday. It may be recalled that during the British Period, the Parade Ground extended from Cubbon Park to its present area and was called Sports Ground and Garrison Parade Ground. Later, owing to the needs of urbanisation, the area shrank to the present range. This parade ground is the site of the annual parade for Republic Day and Independence Day.

A source from the Defence Ministry said, "This project was spearheaded by Major General Ravi Murugan, AVSM, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Karnataka and Kerala Sub Area, and was completed in just over eight weeks. Standing tall and majestic, the Grand Gate boasts a meticulously planned layout, a harmonious blend of military precision and artistic finesse. With dimensions measuring 66 feet in width and 20 feet in height, the gate embodies the discipline of effort that defines the Indian Army. It is also architecturally appealing, seamlessly blending tradition with modern design. Intricate detailing and symbolic elements adorn its structure, creating a visual spectacle and signifying the military ethos associated with the Indian Army."

Central to the Grand Gate stands a seven-iron-frame statue of Field Marshal SHFJ Sam Manekshaw, MC, flanked by the insignia of Southern Command and the Karnataka and Kerala Sub Area.

"With meticulous craftsmanship, the statue captures the essence of his resolute leadership, serving as a poignant reminder of his invaluable contributions to the nation. An Indian Army crest at the apex of the gate marks the values, ethos, and spirit of the Indian Army. The logo typically features the national emblem and crossed swords. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the Grand Gate seamlessly integrates with the Parade Ground, enhancing the overall ambiance of ceremonial events and creating a harmonious backdrop, infusing every event with the spirit of patriotism and military tradition," said a release.

> **"It is also architecturally appealing, seamlessly blending tradition with modern design** — a source from Defence Ministry

It added that plans are underway to engage the community through military displays, educational programmes, and guided tours.

Pension: Women can nominate kids

Rules amended to allow women employees to nominate their children for family pension

#NEW DELHI

The government on Monday amended rules granting the women employee the right to nominate their son(s) or daughter(s) for family pension instead of her husband.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) Jitendra Singh said that the Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare (DoP&PW) has introduced an amendment to the CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021 which will now allow a female government employees or pensioners to grant family pension to their eligible child/children after their own demise, instead of their spouse.

He said that the amendment will address situations where marital discord leads to divorce proceedings or cases filed under acts such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, Dowry Prohibition Act or the Indian Penal Code.

He said that previously, the family pension was granted to the spouse of a deceased government servant or pensioner, while other family members became eligible only after the spouse's ineligibility or demise. "The amendment allows female government servants or pensioners to request the grant of family pension to their eligible child/children after their own demise, instead of their spouse," he said.

The DoP&PW said that the female government servant or pensioner must make a written request to the concerned Head of Office, stating that family pension should be granted to her eligible child/children in precedence to her spouse, in the event of her death during the ongoing proceedings.

Centre has introduced an amendment to the CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021

> **"After all eligible children cease to be eligible for pension, it will be payable to the widower until his death or remarriage, whichever occurs first** –DoP&PW

"If the female government servant or pensioner passes away during the proceedings, the family pension will be disbursed accordingly," the DoP&PW said.

It said that if a woman employee is survived by a widower with no eligible child, the family pension will be payable to the widower.

"However, if the widower is the guardian of a minor child or a child suffering from a mental disorder, the family pension will be payable to the widower, as long as he remains the guardian. Once the child attains majority and remains eligible for family pension, it will be payable directly to the child," DoP&PW said.

It said that for cases where the deceased female government servant or pensioner is survived by a widower and children who have attained majority but are eligible for family pension, the family pension will be payable to such children.

It said that similarly, the families of missing employees covered under NPS can now get a family pension within six months of lodging FIR and not wait for seven years after which the employee is considered deemed dead. "Even in cases where the government servant dies before completing a service of seven years, family pension shall be payable to the family at an enhanced rate of 50% of last pay for the first 10 years and thereafter @ 30% of last pay," the DoP&PW added.

–IANS

Furore over Hanuman flag intensifies

The situation in Keragodu and the district headquarters city of Mandya remained tense on Monday as security was beefed up a day after a row broke out over the removal of a saffron flag featuring a portrait of Lord Hanuman, with protests demanding its restoration gaining steam.

Although there has been no violence, the incident led to a political confrontation between the Congress government and opposition BJP-JD(S), who have joined forces with the protestors.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah accused the opposition BJP and JD(S) of trying to instigate the people over the issue, with an eye on the coming Lok Sabha elections.

Police on Sunday had resorted to mild lathi charge to disperse the crowd at Keragodu village, and subsequently hoisted the National Flag on the 108-ft tall flagpost replacing the 'Hanuman dhwaja', in the presence of officials of the administration.

On Monday, the protestors marched from Keragodu to the Deputy Commissioner's office in the district headquarters of Mandya, covering a distance of about 14 km, holding saffron flags amid chants of "Jai Sri Ram". They also raised slogans against the Congress government.

BJP leaders C T Ravi and Preetham Gowda and JD(S) leaders Suresh Gowda and K Annadani joined the demonstrators. As the march reached Mandya city, police resorted to mild lathi charge to disperse the crowd as some of the activists allegedly tried to bring down a flex board featuring the image of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and other Congress leaders, according to official sources. Later scores of protestors gathered near the Deputy Commissioner's office, where police were deployed in large numbers and barricades were erected. Ravi and the JD(S) leaders with former CM HD Kumaraswamy addressed the crowd.

–PTI

BM Trippin' Tales

Consumer Connect Initiative

Have a date with history, so close to Bengaluru

We explore various locations drawn by the intriguing stories associated with them. Places with mythological connections pique our interest, and one such destination is Avani in the Kolar district. Linked to the Ramayana writer Valmiki, Avani has an architecturally splendid temple at its foothills, and a hillock invites trekkers for an adventurous climb.

According to local legends and the gazetteer, Avani, previously known as Avantika Kshetra, holds great sanctity. It is believed to be the residence of the poet Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana, earning the name Valmiki Parvata. Rama is said to have camped here during his return from Lanka, and Sita, abandoned by Rama, is said to have given birth to her twin sons at this sacred place. Referred to as the Gaya of the south in later inscriptions, Avani has historical significance dating back to 339 AD, as mentioned in the Bana inscription.

PIC COURTESY: ARUN BHARADWAJ

Ancient temples, Avani

Avani has historical significance dating back to 339 AD

Interestingly, nearby Avani is another hillock called Karvedi Konda, where Lord Ram is said to have camped during the Ashwamedha Yaga. The stories narrate a war fought between Ram and his sons, Lav and Kush, in the region between Karvedi Konda and Avani. Besides the tales, Karvedi Konda offers an excellent trekking experience, providing panoramic views of surrounding hillocks, a small spring on the way, and a serene summit point where many believe their life predictions can be seen in dreams.

At the foothills of Avani, several ancient temples add to the historical charm. These temples, forming a sub-group dedicated to various deities like Shiva, Parvati, and Subramanya, are believed to have been consecrated during the time of Sri Rama and his brothers. Inscriptions suggest their existence since the Ganga period, with reconstructions or renovations occurring during the Chola period. Notably, the Kamakshi temple was built during the Vijayanagara era. The Mahadwaras, entrance gates, also showcase the architectural evolution, with one from the Chola days and another from the 13th or 14th century, as described in the gazetteer.

Road labs to ensure quality control

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

complain about pothole formations on the roads. While the Palike has been taking up asphalting and patchwork, citizens have always questioned the lifespan of these roads and criticised the poor quality of construction. The new measure is expected to provide some relief to road users with the assurance of quality roads.

Palike is also in the process of building permanent BBMP labs for conducting tests to avoid over-dependence on various private agencies.

Through the mobile van, BBMP will be equipped with various equipment such as a compression testing machine, soil hydrometer (for grain size analysis of soil), rapid moisture meter, bitumen penetrometer (to determine the grade of bitumen), ultrasonic pulse velocity tester (for testing homogeneity of concrete) rebound hammer (for testing compressive strength of ordinary concrete), thickness gauge and length gauge, aggregate impact tester, slump test apparatus (for determining the consistency of freshly mixed concrete), dynamic cone penetration test (for determining resistance to penetration), and so forth.

Civic expert MN Sreehari said: "Such labs are widely used across countries. Many years ago, Bengaluru used to have a mobile lab. It's crucial in conducting tests without cutting into the roads, retaining percentages and load tests. It can ensure that tests are conducted to ensure the road meets various parameters leading to increased road life."

Animators, gamers, comic lovers unite

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday inaugurated the fifth edition of GAFX2024, the country's leading meet in the animation, visual effects, gaming and comics, here.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the three-day event, Siddaramaiah said: "We aim to leverage Karnataka's existing strength in IT to establish the state as a global leader in AVGCXR. We envision to position Karnataka as a global innovation leader in AVGCXR technology and create a robust talent pool by transforming the state into a centre of excellence for AVGCXR and generate 30,000 new jobs in the sector by 2028 and ensure exports constitute at least 80 per cent of the sector's revenue."

The government intends to create a platform that brings collaboration among industry, academia, and government to work on the learnings, trends, challenges, and create a future roadmap of the AVGC sector.

Karnataka was the first state to address the domestic and global needs of the sector by launching the AVGC Policy in 2012. GAFX was launched by the Congress government in 2016, under the leadership of the Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah and Priyank Kharge, Minister of IT-BT.

This year, the event is spread over 115 sessions with 130 speakers, out of which 22 are eminent international experts from ten different countries. **IANS**

How pollution raises land surface temperature

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

during the winter season with PM2.5 accounting for about 76% change in LST.

Researchers found air pollutants such as PM2.5 indirectly impact land surface temperature by affecting the atmosphere's radiative properties by altering incoming solar radiation and potentially modifying local climate dynamics.

"During winters in Bengaluru, stagnant atmospheric conditions often lead to poor dispersion of pollutants, particularly PM2.5. The lack of vertical mixing and lower temperatures can result in the accumulation of fine particulate matter near the surface, impacting the land surface temperature (LST). Fine particulate matter can absorb and scatter sunlight, influencing the local energy balance and surface temperature. However, in summer, elevated O3 levels are often associated with increased photochemical reactions. Intense solar radiation and higher temperatures can trigger the formation of ozone as pollutants interact in the atmosphere. Ozone too changes LST by affecting the absorption and reflection of solar radiation," said Gaurav Suthar, research scholar at Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan and co-author of the study.

The concentration of air pollutants for the study was obtained from 10 CAAQMS stations installed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) as part of the National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP); satellite data was used to analyse the land surface temperature.

The results suggest that reducing PM2.5 concentrations in the atmosphere can reduce LST.

Experts BM spoke to noted that addressing the impact of PM2.5 and other pollutants on land surface temperature in the city requires a multifaceted approach. Not only is the implementation and strict enforcement of emission standards for industries, vehicles, and power plants crucial, but adoption of cleaner technologies in various sectors, such as promoting electric vehicles and transitioning to cleaner fuels, can significantly reduce the primary sources of these pollutants.

"Additionally, integrating green urban planning initiatives, which include increasing green spaces and urban vegetation, contributes to pollutant absorption and improves air quality while mitigating local temperature increases. Improving public transportation infrastructure, managing traffic effectively, and raising public awareness about the sources and impacts of these pollutants are essential components of a comprehensive strategy," added Suthar.

Enhancing air quality monitoring systems and better collaboration among government agencies, industries, and the public are important aspects for a successful implementation of these strategies, according to experts. Investing in research and innovation for new technologies will further complement these efforts, offering long-term solutions to reduce pollutant concentrations.

Other co-authors of the study included Dr Nivedita Kaul, Dr Sumit Khandelwal, associate professors, Malaviya National Institute of Technology, and Saurabh Singh, research scholar at the institute.

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I, Rajadorai Karupuswamy Easwaran S/o K Easwaran R/o No-GF4, Surya Park View Apt, 17th Cross, Subhash Bhavan Road, Ideal Homes, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Bangalore - 560098 have changed my name from Rajadorai Karupuswamy Easwaran to Rajadorai Easwaran vide affidavit No IN-KA77118622635236V dated 21.12.2023 for all future purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I Latha .H.S W/o M.R.Shivaswamy residing at No.111, beside Anganavadi Kendra, Maranagere, Tiptur town-572201, Tumkur, stating that my name entered as Hemalatha .H.S in passport. But my name entered as Latha .H.S in Aadhar Card above mentioned both names Hemalatha .H.S and Latha H.S. are same and mine only. But I would like to officially change my name from Hemalatha .H.S to Latha H.S. Hereinafter I will henceforth deal with the name Latha .H.S only. as per My date of birth mentioned in passport as 17-05-1970 is wrong And my correct Date of Birth is 01-01-1971 as per my aadhar card no. 440573503254. Therefore, i have sworn before Notary and Advocate K.R.Umesh, Tiptur vide affidavit dated 19.01.2024.

I Jaya Prakash Ramayya Shetty S/o Thekkatte Ramayya Shetty R/o no F 1, Kanchana Heights, Plot No 124, 6th Main, P&t Colony, Sanjayanagar, Bengaluru 560094 have changed my name to Jayaprakash Shetty for all purposes.

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HEALTH TIP: The rate of hair growth slows as your body ages, and each hair strand becomes smaller

Dehydration is a common culprit behind headaches. Reaching for a glass of water is often the simplest remedy

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TENDER LOVING CARE

How humans can expand their 'moral circle'

A cost-of-living crisis, the ongoing impact of covid, climate change, and numerous global conflicts and refugee crises. When it feels like so many people are doing it tough, how do we decide where to direct our compassion?

In a world that seems increasingly fractured, we wanted to find out if people can bridge the divide between "us" and "them" – to grow their feelings of wanting to help others, who would be typically beyond their "moral circle".

We discovered that a surprisingly short period of compassion training can expand how much someone cares about people far beyond their immediate circle.

Measuring who matters most to us

Not all moral connections are equal. If the person suffering is our child, our partner, our friend, we are quick to help. But when faced with the suffering of a complete stranger, or someone on the other side of the planet, our motivation to help is likely reduced.

Taking this further, what if the person suffering was actually someone we disliked, or even someone who may have caused harm to others? Would we care then?

Philosophers such as Peter Singer have developed the popular term "moral circle" to refer to those we consider worthy of our concern and those we do not. Typically we prioritise the moral needs of our family and ingroup (the social group we belong to) first, and we care much less about those different or distant to us.

Researchers have found we order groups in this fairly predictable way: family/friends, ingroup, revered, stigmatised, outgroup, animals (high sentience), environment, animals (low sentience), plants, and villains.

Research also shows Australia is not particularly high in terms of moral expansiveness – the size of one's moral circle. In a 2022 study, Australia ranked 32nd on a moral expansiveness scale (MES), with countries like Canada, France and China ranking much higher.

But are our moral boundaries fixed, or can we move up the moral expansiveness ladder? The question of whether our moral concern for others is stable or zero sum (that is, "my concern for someone comes at the expense of another") is an empirical one.

> **Researchers say their work shows that compassion is stronger than both empathy and mindfulness at predicting the size of one's moral circle**

Can we expand our moral circles?

When thinking about ways to grow our moral circle, things like empathy and mindfulness may come to mind. But our work shows that compassion is stronger than both at predicting the size of one's moral circle.

Our work also shows that compassion predicts our willingness to help those we dislike. And other research shows compassion training increases feelings of closeness toward a disliked person.

Building on this, our latest research found that a brief compassion training intervention can increase our moral expansiveness.

In this study, 102 participants were randomly assigned to complete a brief two-hour seminar on compassion training, or to a control group who didn't attend a seminar.

In the seminar, we focused on defining compassion. The message was: things like anger, anxiety and sadness are normal human emotions, but we have a responsibility to learn and practice how to work with these feelings in helpful and supportive ways.

Participants then had two weeks to continue to practice what we did in the intervention by listening to guided audio exercises, which were a combination of compassionate breathing and imagery exercises, as well as meditations.

Compassion meditations typically follow a set structure. We begin by expressing compassion to a target – someone we like – but then expand out to other targets, such as strangers or disliked others, to other sentient beings like animals, and to elements of the natural environment, such as coral reefs or forests.

We found that two weeks after the program, participants who had completed compassion training has greater moral expansiveness towards family and revered groups in society (for example, charity workers).

At the three month follow-up, these outcomes improved further. Moral concern for others had increased across the board, including towards outgroup members (such as political opponents), stigmatised members of society, animals, plants, the environment – and even towards supposed "villains" in our society (for example, convicted criminals).

This shows compassion and moral expansiveness are closely connected. We don't know for sure, but the improved results at the three month mark may have been due to continuing the audio exercises, or perhaps due to a "sleeper effect" – it takes time for people to shift their moral view.

A hopeful future?

The year 2024 is full of big choices, with 4 billion people eligible to vote on who should lead their country.

Election years often spiral into divisions of "us" and "them", with "we" the public having to choose between the people and policies we hope will improve our world.

Compassion might offer one way to ensure we don't fall into the trap of turning against one another. We can all recognise the right for people and sentient creatures to live a life free of suffering.

And if compassion helps guide us in our decisions and actions, and even expand our moral sensibilities, we may be better placed to tackle some of the big challenges we are facing – and ensure those who are suffering most don't get left behind.

(By James Kirby, The University of Queensland; and Charlie Crimston, Australian National University, The Conversation)

All you need to know about...

Music for the brain

Better for older age
Researchers have discovered that engaging in music throughout your life is linked with better brain health in older adults, a new study has said.

Study on effect of playing music on over 1,000 adults
In the study published in the journal International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, the researchers examined data from over a thousand adults above 40 to see the effect of playing a musical instrument -- or singing in a choir -- on brain health.
More than 25,000 people have signed up for the study called 'PROTECT', which has been running for 10 years.

Good for memory and even greater benefits
The findings revealed that playing a musical instrument, such as the piano, can improve memory and executive function -- a skill that helps you solve complex problems.
Continuing to play into later life provides even greater benefits. The study also suggested that singing was also connected to better brain health, although this may also be due to the social factors of being part of a choir or group.

Harnessing brain's agility
"Our PROTECT study has given us a unique opportunity to explore the relationship between cognitive performance and music in a large cohort of older adults. Overall, we think that being musical could be a way of harnessing the brain's agility and resilience, known as cognitive reserve," said Anne Corbett, Professor at the University of Exeter.
"Although more research is needed to investigate this relationship, our findings indicate that promoting musical education would be a valuable part of public health initiatives to promote a protective lifestyle for brain health, as would encouraging older adults to return to music in later life," she added. —IANS

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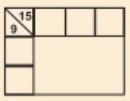
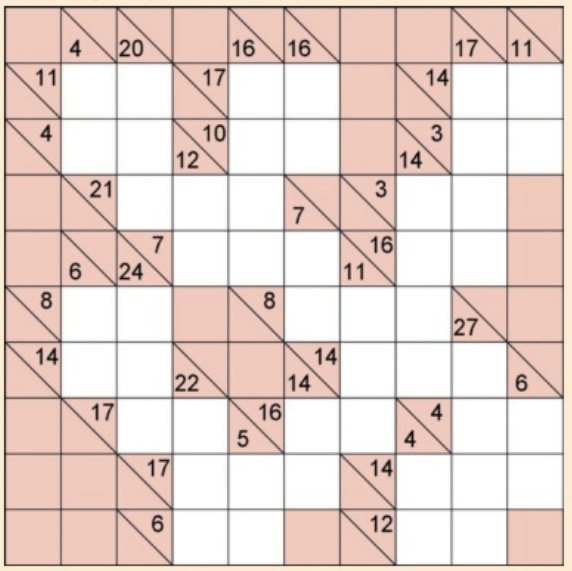
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

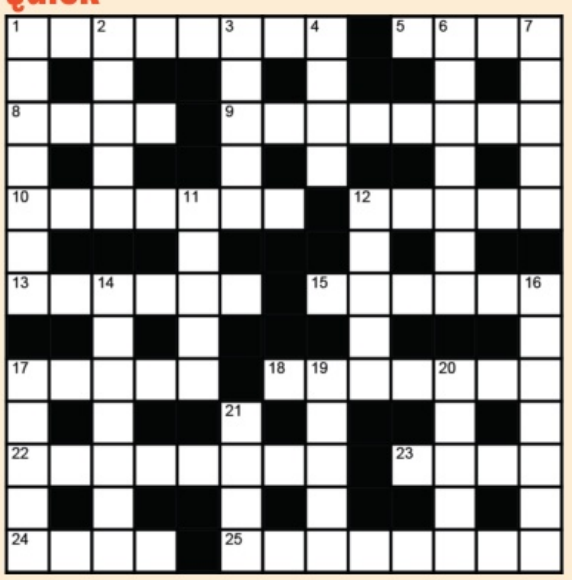


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Eats, devours or digests (8)
5 One much worshipped (4)
8 Venomous snakes (4)
9 __ __ for : replaces some one? (6,2)
10 Trendy (7)
12 Grooming device (5)
13 Acquiesce (6)
15 This lake can be found along the junction of Bellary Road and the Outer Ring Road (6)
17 Clemency (5)
18 Archie Andrews Or Shaun Pollock for one (7)
22 Underground cemetery (8)
23 Apportion (4)
24 Ornamental band (4)
25 Strokes or fondles (8)

DOWN

1 Framework of a car or a vehicle (7)
2 Pleasantly cold and invigorating (5)
3 Hebrew prophet (5)
4 Steep in liquid (4)
6 Unsettle (7)
7 Midday meal (5)
11 In a frigid manner (5)
12 Baguette, brioche, etc (5)
14 Scolds or rebukes (7)
16 Climbing frames (7)
17 Makes fun of, derides or jeers (5)
19 A smouldering piece of coal (5)
20 Fencing swords (5)
21 Pear variety (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: G EQUALS D

UNMRWV GFR'U LNSRWX, OCU OI SRG OI FCD PMVNXV LNSRWX.

Linemaro

Wow, you must have a great dentist!

Mindchow

There is no grief like the grief that does not speak

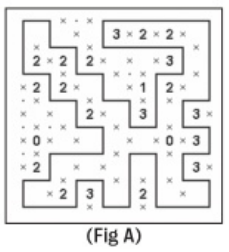
Joke of the day

If you're being chased by a police dog, try not to go through a tunnel, then on to a little seesaw, then jump through a hoop of fire. They're trained for that

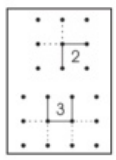
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)



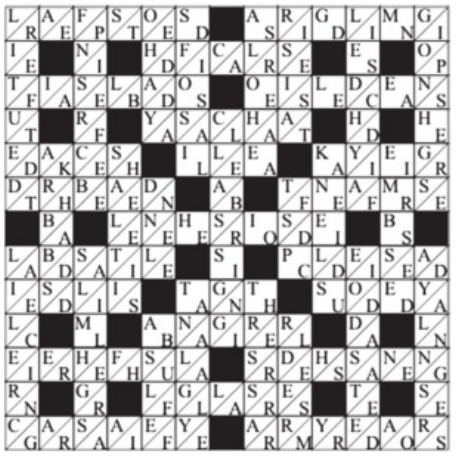
(Fig B) Not Allowed

How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)

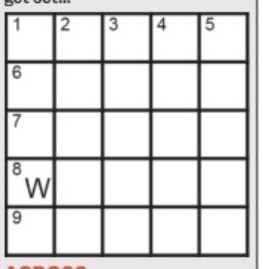
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 Satyr; 6 Lam he;
7 Caaba; 8 As why;
9 Its NS

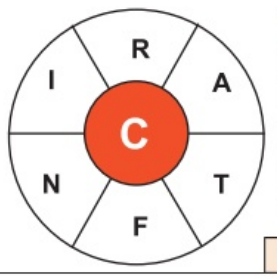
DOWN

1 What's; 2 Ran be;
3 Masai; 4 Cathy;
5 As sly

Mensapuzzle

Draw the missing figure in the above sequence.

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

05 Average; **06** Good; **08** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	4	1		2		5	9	
	5		9		1		4	
2								3
			8	5	4			
		8				4		
			2	1	3			
6								4
	3		7		6		8	
	9	4		8		6	3	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

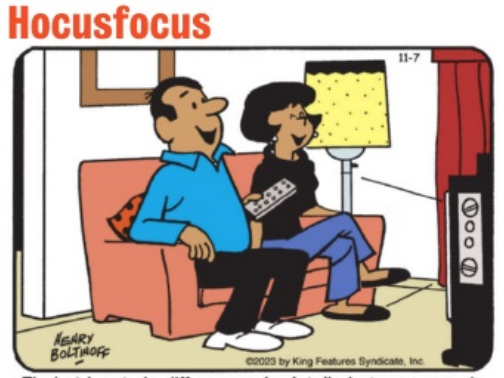
Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 10
4 4 6 8

Medium = 13
1 3 8 8

Hard = 8
2 5 5 4

Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Foot is moved. 2. Arm of couch is not showing. 3. Back of couch is rounder. 4. Hair is different. 5. End of wall is moved. 6. Remote is smaller.

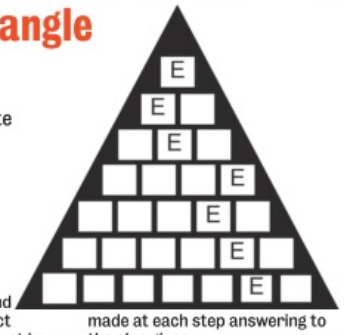
Riddler

A spoonerism is a pair of words that can have their initial sounds switched to form new words. The pairs need only sound the same, not necessarily be spelled the same (power saw & sour paw, horse cart & coarse heart). There may sometimes be one or two connecting words (kick the stone & stick the cone, king of the rats & ring of the cats). Given the following definitions, what are the spoonerisms?

1) kingly organs & faithful ladder steps
2) a barrier made of hardened clay & a fight between candles

Alpha triangle

1 Second vowel
2 Editor, abbr.
3 Warning colour
4 Urgent; desperate
5 Televised
6 Poured down
7 More flaxen



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

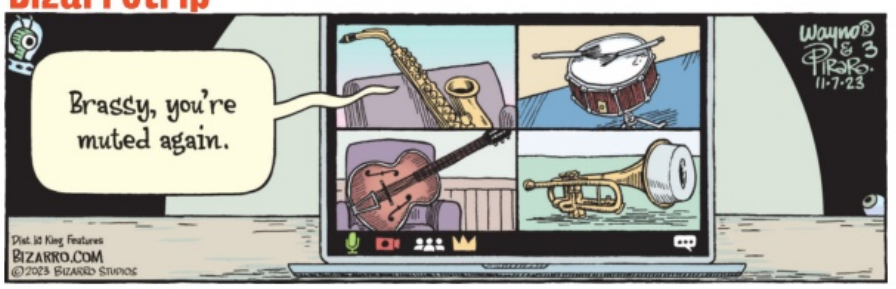
DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Redeye by Mel Casson

I WONDER WHAT TIME IT IS?
TWO MINUTES AND FORTY SECONDS PAST MIDNIGHT
10-24
GOSH, YOU CAN TELL ALL THAT FROM THE STARS?
NO - FROM A PALEFACE'S WATCH I FOUND

Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

Crankshaft

FIRST, I'D LIKE TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE PAPER DELIVERY ISSUES WE'VE BEEN HAVING.
Centerville Sentinel
SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW THAT OUR ROUTE DRIVER CLYDE PETERSON BROKE HIS HIP, AND THAT HIS 1980 STATION WAGON GAVE UP THE GHOST.
SO IT SEEMS THAT BOTH CLYDE AND HIS STATION WAGON HAVE BROKEN DOWN AT THE SAME TIME!
tombatiuk.com/books

Mutts

HOW ARE YOU DOING TODAY, PAL? I BAKED YOU SOME DOG COOKIES.
SORRY...
I HAD MORE
CHOMP CHOMP
BUT I GOT A LITTLE HUNGRY DURING MATH CLASS.
mutts.com/GuardDog
www.kingfeatures.com

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, blessings from elders' may make you happy, and your investments may give you profits. Losses are now converted into profits. Your savings may boost your bank balance. You may plan to invest in your kid's future as well. You may also enjoy some delicious food at home. Your problems related to the throat, teeth, ear, or nose may be resolved now.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, you are blessed by elders. Your patience becomes very good, and your focus on your work may be very good. Parents' health has now improved. You are likely to spend your time with elders. You may also meet some influential people who may help you on a professional front. You may also enjoy your romantic moments, which may increase harmony in domestic life.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, you may be spiritual, and you may help needy people around you. You also plan to donate some amount to a charity or religious place. Your good karma may help you achieve success in your difficult projects. You may feel that some divine power around you may help you in unpredictable situations. You may be attracted to the occult. Students are likely to enjoy studying in depth.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today, you may feel dull; you may be a victim of hidden fear, which may make you scared. You are not in a situation to trust anyone. It is advised to do meditation and chant some prayers, which may help you come out of this hypothetical situation. With the help of the elder's blessings around late evening, you may come out of this messy situation.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, you may be busy at work, your network may be increased, and with the help of your network, you are likely to get a big order in terms of business and work. You are likely to start innovating in partnership. You may get some investments in your business, which will increase your business in the near future. Your emotional relationship with your spouse will improve.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, you may find yourself in a state of self-analysis, which will give you some confidence. Your focus on your goals is now clear; you may achieve your goal. Your creativity might improve, and you will take an interest in artefacts, movies, glamour, and real-life objects. At the end of the day, you may feel some satisfaction related to your life. Your opponents are likely to be under control now.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, you are likely to use your creativity to renovate your house or office. Your focus on your goals may be good. Your mind may get tired due to overworking, which can create anxiety, restlessness, and stress and may affect your domestic life. Students are advised to avoid fantasy in their studies; they are advised to study with focus and dedication.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today, you may be dissatisfied. People around you may not cooperate with you. You are advised to keep patient. You are also advised to read documents carefully before signing any contracts. Making new investments in useless stuff may be a bottleneck for you. Students are advised to read their subjects with patience.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, you may be enthusiastic; you may be more focused, which may speed up your postponed projects. Your subordinates may help you start a new project, which may give you profit in the near future. You may expect some short trips related to your family issues. Job seekers may hear good news in terms of jobs.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, you may be busy with family issues. You may make some important decisions on the domestic front. You should avoid making arguments about personal life matters. Your arrogance may affect domestic harmony. You are advised to follow your intuition before making investments in the business.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, your inner strength may help you start some new innovations on the work front. You are likely to get a big order in your parental business, which will increase growth in the business in the near future. New responsibilities in your job may make you busy. Job seekers might get a good job. Understanding with the spouse may be improved, which can maintain harmony in family life.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, you may feel dull, and your health may not be good. You may be nervous. You may also have anxiety and restlessness. You are advised to postpone your important investments in business or real estate. You are advised to avoid rash driving. You should avoid long-distance travel as well. You are advised to do some meditation; it will be helpful in controlling a messy situation.

KIDZONE

Soumili Day,
6 years,
New Horizon
Public School

Dishan Karthik,
10 years,
Vittal Jaycees
High School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
(1/4)*√(√(4096))=
(1/4)*√16=
1

BULL'S EYE
antic, cant, cart, craft, fact, franc, FRANTIC, INFARCT

STRIKE OUT

QUICK

MENSA PUZZLE
Lines are added vertically then horizontally.

QUOTE UNCODE
Things don't change, but by and by our wishes change.

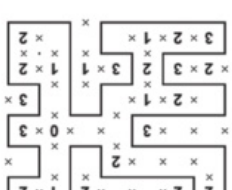
SUDOKU

1	9	4	5	8	2	6	3	7
5	3	2	7	4	6	1	8	9
6	8	7	1	3	9	2	5	4
4	7	5	2	1	3	9	6	8
3	1	8	6	9	7	4	2	5
9	2	6	8	5	4	3	7	1
2	6	9	4	7	5	8	1	3
8	5	3	9	6	1	7	4	2
7	4	1	3	2	8	5	9	6

ALPHA TRIANGLE
E, Ed, Red, Dire, Alfred, Railred, Sandler.

GO FIGURE
Easy
8 + 4 + 4 − 6 = 10
Medium
8 + 8 − 3 x 1 = 13
Hard
4 x 5 x 2 / 5 = 8

LOOP



KAKURO

FAST FIVE

T	R	A	Y	S
H	E	M	A	L
A	B	A	C	A
W	A	S	H	Y
S	N	I	T	S

RIDDLER
1) royal lungs & loyal rungs,
2) brick wall & wick brawl

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 # Just a couple of best actors
Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt win best actor trophies at Filmfare Awards

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

It is release time

Though the film For Registration went on floors a few years ago, its release has been postponed. Now, arrangements are on to release it on February 23. Prithvi Ambar and Milana Nagaraj are the lead pair in this movie.

"The current situation in the Kannada film industry is challenging. The release of For Registration is delayed and I own the responsibility for it. There are many reasons including technical and quality for the delay. Milana Nagaraj and Prithvi Ambar supported us a lot," said director Naveen Dwarakanath, adding that the movie is a family drama.

Prithvi said he signed the agreement to act in this film much before acting in the movie Diya. Milana said producer Naveen Rao is among the most fascinating producers she has come across in her career. "It is my first movie with Prithvi. The movie can become everyone's favourite," said Milana.

Maadeva teaser out

The teaser of much-awaited big-budget movie Maadeva was released at a function in Kalavidara Sangha, Chamarajpet. Director Tarun Sudhir, actors Abishek Ambareesh, Dhanveer Gowda, and Zaid Khan graced the function.

"Vinod Prabhakar and I have a good bonding. Vinod is a real fighter and known for working hard with dedication. Maadeva has come out very well. Vinod looks good with a beard. It is not easy to make this type of movie that needs a lot of research and hard work," said director Tarun Sudhir. Vinod Prabhakar, Sonal Monteiro, Shruthi, and director Naveen Reddy were present on the occasion.

Actor Abishek Ambareesh said he is not mature enough to talk about Vinod Prabhakar's acting skills or his screen presence. "He is older than me but looks younger. I like the visuals, camera work, and music of Maadeva. Its subject looks different," said Abishek.

Appreciating the producer, Vinod said it would be difficult to make this genre of movie. "There is a lot to talk about but I will talk during the trailer release," he said.

Sonal Monteiro said Maadeva is her second movie with Vinod Prabhakar. "I play a village belle in this movie," said Sonal.

Crooning beauty

Nora Fatehi, renowned for her captivating dance prowess, continues to captivate audiences with her latest international single, 'I'm Bossy'. The official video release has already caused ripples, showcasing Fatehi's stunning presence and impeccable dance skills. As fans immerse themselves in the video, it's clear that Fatehi's charm and talent continue to mesmerise audiences worldwide.With Jojo Gomez's involvement in the project, excitement levels soar even higher, considering her remarkable track record with music legends.

'I'm Bossy' not only delivers a musical festival with its infectious Afro-pop beats but also emerges as a visual spectacle, establishing itself as a dance anthem. Nora showcases her prowess through captivating choreography,promising an exhilarating experience for her global fan base.

Nora Fatehi joins the cast of 'KD - The Devil', as announced by the makers, celebrating her arrival with excitement. Described as an "ethereal beauty," Fatehi's presence is set to ignite passion within KD's Warfield, promising an intriguing addition to the storyline. **—ETimes**

FASHION DIVA

'When I entered the industry, red carpet looks were non-existent'

Sonam Kapoor's love for fashion is well known. She never misses a chance to dish out fashion goals with her appearances in public and made her presence felt in the latest edition of Paris Haute Couture Week.

Opening up about her passion for fashion, Sonam shared, "I love fashion. My mum used to be a fashion designer. So, I grew up surrounded by fashion. When I entered the industry, I noticed that red carpet looks were not so common, in fact non-existent, and I wanted to wear beautiful things and go on the red carpet. I started doing that without realising I was different to everyone else."

"My passion for films and fashion led me to create that impact. I am enjoying fashion and beautiful things without taking myself too seriously. Fashion is supposed to be fun, an escape. It's important to appreciate the beauty and goodness in life," she added.

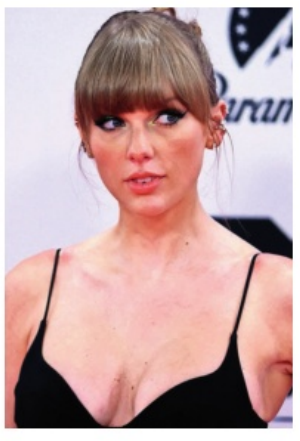
Sonam is making waves in the fashion industry but she is also now eying for significant acting projects.

Sonam was recently seen in the film 'Blind' directed by Shome Makhija and also starring Purab Kohli, Vinay Pathak, and Lillete Dubey in prominent roles. The film marked Sonam's return to acting after a maternity break.

Sonam gave birth to Vayu in August 2022. She has signed two new projects as well.

Talking about them, Sonam said, "I took two years off as I was pregnant and then wanted to take some time off with my son. Two years are not done yet and I have signed onto two projects - one show and one film that I will start working on. It will release in another year, because that is how films work. Then my idea is to do two pieces of content every year, that's it, not more because I want to spend time with my family as well." . **—ANI**

Pause on Swift search



Social media platform X has blocked searches for Taylor Swift as pornographic deepfake images of the singer have circulated online.

Attempts to search for her name on the site resulted in an error message and a prompt for users to retry their search, which added, "Don't fret — it's not your fault."Searches for variations of her name such as "taylorswift" and "Taylor Swift AI" turned up the same error messages.

Sexually explicit and abusive fake images of Swift began circulating widely last week on X, making her the most famous victim of a scourge that tech platforms and anti-abuse groups have struggled to fix.

"This is a temporary action and done with an abundance of caution as we prioritize safety on this issue," Joe Benarroch, head of business operations at X, said in a statement to multiple news outlets.

After the images began spreading online, the singer's devoted fanbase of "Swifties" quickly mobilized, launching a counter-offensive on X and a #ProtectTaylorSwift hashtag to flood it with more positive images of the pop star. Some said they were reporting accounts that were sharing the deepfakes.

The deepfake-detecting group Reality Defender said it tracked a deluge of non-consensual pornographic material depicting Swift. The researchers found at least a couple dozen unique AI generated images. **—AP**

Amy is engaged

Amy Jackson, who has been dating actor Ed Westwick for quite some time now, got engaged to him in Switzerland.

The actress took to the Instagram handle to share dreamy proposal photos with her fans. Amy shared a photo where she appears shocked as Ed proposes to her by getting down on one knee. She also posted joyful pictures of the two after the proposal.

Ed popped the question to Amy in Switzerland, surrounded by snow-covered mountains. The actress captioned the post with, "Hell YES."

As soon as she shared the dreamy photos, her friends and fans showered love in the comment section. While Athiya Shetty wrote, 'Congratulations', Kiara Advani dropped red heart emojis on the photos. Orry also took to the comment section and wrote, 'Biggest congratulations angel !!!' **—ETimes**